

HUTCHINSON HAT-TRICK CRUSHES CHELTENHAM

Wycombe Wanderers 6, Cheltenham Town 1

CRUSHING power play—featuring a much-deserved hat-trick from Johnny Hutchinson—ground visiting Cheltenham Town down to a humiliating 6-1 defeat in Tuesday evening's friendly at Loakes Park, and confirmed Wycombe Wanderers as the team everyone will have to beat this season.

The star packed Wanderers select showed minimum respect for their visitors' Southern League status. And rightly so, for in every way they overshadowed an inexperienced, yet spirited Cheltenham eleven.

Should he eventually decide to join Cheltenham, Julian Lailey should certainly find a regular place awaiting him.

MONEY TROUBLE

In financial difficulties and ing with four amateurs in their semi-professional line-up, Town looked shaky from the kick-off when Wanderers swept into their area causing instant panic.

Yet in just 45 seconds, Cheltenham were ahead. Left-winger Richard Wilkes picked up the loose ball and sent play straight back upfield via Conboy, Fraser and Lewis for ex-Hillingdon and Bexley striker, John Salmon to shoot in on the run from 25 yards.

Naturally rocked by the lightning goal, Wycombe's defence took several minutes to recover its composure. But in between times, the forwards had already started their onslaught.

Hutchinson, as on Saturday in the 4-1 win over Bath City, took a leading role in proceedings, while the link line showed more willingness than often last season in merging forces with their forwards.

Defensively too, Wanderers looked good. Powell in particular oozed authority while Delaney and Hartridge always keenly moved along with play.

FULL BACKS

At full-back were Keith Blunt and ex-Wanderer, more recently at Oxford City, George Pullen, while last year's favoured men, Gale and Rundle sat watching as substitutes.

Geoff Anthony, whose total effort could never be questioned, was perhaps trying that one per cent too hard and sliced two good scoring chances wide inside ten minutes. More dangerously, Keith Searle twice had the visiting backs guessing.

And, after 23 minutes John Delaney seemed to have headed an equaliser, only for referee Mr. W. G. Cleere to give Town the benefit of the doubt as keeper Heeks gathered the ball to safety.

Forced ever further back into their own half, Cheltenham made a fatal slip to allow Wycombe their first goal in the 32nd minute. A square backpass by Jeffries was soon pounced on by Searle and Hutchinson rose high to head in the subsequent cross.

Again Delaney had a possible "goal" disallowed for what was blatantly offside four minutes from the interval. But there was still time to make it 2-1 and, with seconds of the half remaining, Hutchinson lashed out from the edge of Town's penalty "box", shooting into the top left.

EXPOSEE

Many tried to drag Tumtum into them, but Podgkin made the wood.

Wycombe Wanderers: K. O'Brien (J. Maskell, 59 minutes); K. Blunt, G. Pullen; E. Powell, J. Delaney, L. Hartridge; G. Anthony, B. Baker, K. Searle, B. Bremer, J. Hutchinson.

Cheltenham Town: D. Heeks; R. Thorndale, F. Conboy (Etheridge, 66 minutes); P. Amos, A. Jeffries, A. White, A. Cooper, D. Lewis, J. Salmon, I. Fraser, R. Wilkes.

goal, and went 5-1 up in the 78th minute.

Again it was from a Searle cross, with Hutchinson bringing it down, before turning inside Thorndale and shooting home his hat-trick goal.

TESTING

A testing opponent for Blunt, Wilkes persisted in his search for at least one extra consolation goal for Cheltenham.

Yet the final say went Wycombe's way when, almost on time, Searle drove past the advancing Heeks. Thorndale had fallen back to cover his keeper and managed to put a foot in the way, but succeeded only in diverting it upwards over the line.

M.W.